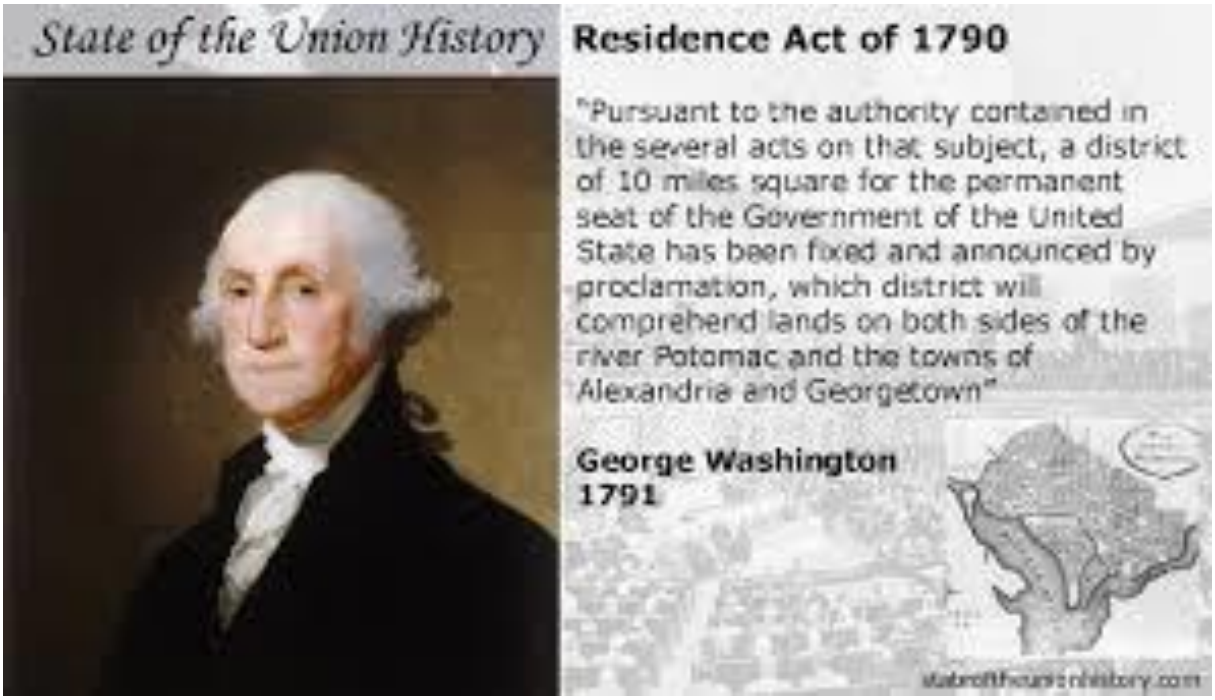
INTRODUCTORY USE OF COLUMBIA

DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS WASHINGTON, D.C

In 1789, discussions were underway regarding a new federal capital city for the United States, and L'Enfant wrote to President Washington asking to be commissioned to plan the city. However, any decision on the capital was put on hold until July 1790 when Congress passed the Residence Act

The Residence Act gave authority to President Washington to appoint three commissioners to oversee the survey of the federal district and provide public buildings to accommodate the Federal government in 1800.

In 1791, Washington appointed L'Enfant to plan the new federal city, under the supervision of three commissioners whom Washington had earlier appointed to oversee the planning and development of the territory that became the District of Columbia.


State of the Union History
Residence Act of 1790
"Pursuant to the authority contained in the several acts on that subject, a district of 10 miles square for the permanent seat of the Government of the United State has been fixed and announced by proclamation, which district will comprehend lands on both sides of the river Potomac and the towns of Alexandria and Georgetown"
George Washington
1791

Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, 8 September 1791

From Thomas Jefferson

George town [Md.] Sep. 8. 1791.

Sir

We were detained on the road by the rains so that we did not arrive here till yesterday about two oclock. as soon as horses could be got ready, we set out & rode till dark, examining chiefly the grounds newly laid open, which we found much superior to what we had imagined. we have passed this day in consultation with the Commissioners, who having deliberated on every article contained in our paper, & preadmonished that it was your desire that they should decide freely on their own view of things, concurred unanimously in, I believe, every point with what had been thought best in Philadelphia, they decided also the following additional matters.1

Quere 2. lots to be sold in four places, viz., on the Eastern branch, near the Capitol, near the President's house, & in the angle between the river & Rock creek.2

3. The ready money payment at the sale to be increased to one fourth, & so advertized immediately. they will send advertisements to some printer in every state.

7. the houses in the avenues to be *exactly* 35 feet high, that is to say their walls. none to be higher in any other part of the town, but may be lower.

11. the compromise stated to you by mister Johnson has put this matter out of all dispute.3

13. the map to be engraved on account of the Commissioners, & the sales of them for the public benefit.4

19. they have named the City & the territory, the latter after Columbus.5

Tomorrow they meet to take measures for carrying into execution all the several matters contained in the paper which I have the honor to return to you, as I believe you have no copy of it.6 Mr Madison & myself propose to pursue our journey in the morning, four days more will bring me to my own house. we were told in Baltimore that that place was becoming better humored towards this, and found it better that the government should be here than in Philadelphia. I have the honor to be with sentiments of the highest respect & attachment Sir Your most obedt & most humble sert

Georgetown, September 9th, 1791

Sir: We have agreed that the Federal District shall be called the **Territory of Columbia**, and the Federal City the **City of Washington**. The title of the map will therefore be, **"A Map of the City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia."**

We are, Sir, your most obedient Servants,

Tho. Johnson

D. Stuart

Danl. Carroll

Pierre Charles L'Enfant, Esqr.

Pierre "Peter" Charles L'Enfant (August 2, 1754 – June 14, 1825)

A French-American artist, professor, and military engineer.

Quick Biography: Path to D.C.

Year	Event	Location
1754	Born in Paris as son of royal painter	**France**
1777	Sailed to America at age 23 to fight in Revolutionary War	**New York**
1783	Fought at Yorktown; became U.S. citizen	**United States**
1789	Designed Federal Hall (NYC; first U.S. Capitol)	**New York**
1791	**Commissioned to plan D.C.; received "Territory of Columbia" letter**	**Georgetown, D.C.**
1792	Submitted grand D.C. plan; fired over disputes	**Washington, D.C.**
1825	Died in poverty; reburied with honors in 1901	**D.C./Arlington**

In 1791, L'Enfant designed the baroque-styled plan for the development of Washington, D.C., after it was designated to become the capital of the United States following its relocation from Philadelphia.

His work, known as the L'Enfant Plan,[1] inspired plans for other major world capitals, including ***Brasília, **New Delhi, and *Canberra.

In the U.S., plans for the development of three major cities, Detroit, Indianapolis, and Sacramento, were inspired from L'Enfant's plan for Washington, D.C.

L'Enfant was a French artist and engineer who served in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War.[5]

***Canberra** is the capital city of Australia and the capital and largest city of the Australian Capital Territory.

****New Delhi** is the capital of India and a part of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT)

*****Brasília** is the capital city of Brazil and the Federal District.

OCTOBER 17TH 1803

EIGHTH *CONGRESS* OF THE UNITED STATES;

AT THE FIRST SESSION,

Begun and held at the city of Washington, in the territory of Columbia, on Monday, the seventeenth of October, one thousand eight hundred and three.

Resolved by the **Senate** and **House** of **Representatives** of the *United States* of *America*, in Congress assembled, Two thirds of both houses concurring, that in lieu of the third paragraph of the first section of the second article of the constitution of the United States, the following be proposed as an amendment to the constitution of the United States, which when ratified by three fourths of the legislatures of the several states, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of the said constitution, to wit:

The Electors shall meet in their respective states, and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice-President, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President, and of all persons voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each; which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. — The President of the Senate shall in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted; — The person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice. And if the House of Representatives shall not choose a President whenever the right of choice shall devolve upon them, before the fourth day of March next following, then the Vice-President shall act as President, as in the case of the death or other constitutional disability of the President. — The person having the greatest number of votes as Vice-President, shall be the Vice-President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed, and if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list, the Senate shall choose the Vice-President; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. — But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States.

Nath[l] Macon Speaker of the House of Representatives.

A. Burr Vice-President of the United States and President of the Senate.

Attest

John Beckley Clerk of the House of Representatives

Attest, Samuel A. Otis Secretary of the Senate

Speaker of the House During the 12th Amendment

The **12th Amendment** was proposed by the **8th United States Congress** on **December 9, 1803**, and ratified on **June 15, 1804**. During this entire period, the **Speaker of the House of Representatives** was **Nathaniel Macon** of North Carolina.

- Macon served as Speaker from **May 15, 1801, to March 3, 1807** (spanning the 7th and 8th Congresses).
- He presided over the House debates and vote on the amendment (passed 84–42 on December 9, 1803).
- As Speaker, Macon was a key figure in maintaining order during the contentious post-1800 election reforms.

President of the United States During the 12th Amendment

The **President** throughout the proposal and ratification was **Thomas Jefferson**.

- Jefferson was in his first term (March 4, 1801 – March 4, 1805).
- The amendment addressed flaws exposed in the 1800 election, where Jefferson (as the intended Democratic-Republican candidate) tied with his running mate Aaron Burr, requiring House intervention to resolve. Jefferson signed no role in the amendment's passage, as it originated in Congress under Article V.

Vice President of the United States During the 12th Amendment

The **Vice President** throughout the proposal (**December 9, 1803**) and ratification (**June 15, 1804**) of the **12th Amendment** was **Aaron Burr** of New York.

Office	Name	Party	Term Dates	Key Notes
Vice President	**Aaron Burr**	Democratic-Republican	March 4, 1801 – March 3, 1805	Served under President Thomas Jefferson; central figure in the 1800 election tie that *prompted* the 12th Amendment

Context:

- Burr tied with Jefferson in the 1800 Electoral College (73 votes each), forcing the House to decide. This crisis exposed flaws in the original system (Electors voted for two names without distinguishing President/VP).
- As Vice President, Burr **presided over the Senate** during the amendment's Senate passage (17–14 vote on October 17, 1803). Ironically, the amendment ended his political career by reforming the very process that elevated him.
- Burr left office in 1805 and later faced controversy (e.g., 1807 treason trial).

Full Leadership Trio (8th Congress):

Position	Name	State
President	Thomas Jefferson	Virginia
Vice President	Aaron Burr	New York
Speaker of the House	Nathaniel Macon	N. Carolina